

PILGRIM NUCLEAR PLANT

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Pilgrim Disaster Drill Reviewed in Plymouth

Duxbury residents Jane Fleming and Mary Lampert were vocal critics at last week's Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) hearing in Plymouth's Memorial Hall, which was held to review the Dec. 13 disaster drill.

The drill was conducted to evaluate local agencies' ability to respond to a nuclear disaster.

Fleming and Lampert, longtime critics of the plant and the regional emergency plan, criticized federal officials for not requiring that Duxbury schoolchildren be monitored for radiation before being taken to a reception center.

Fleming noted that although the schoolchildren were not monitored, the 1,000 prisoners in the Plymouth County House of Correction were - when they were evacuated to the state prison in Bridgewater.

"All schoolchildren should at least get equal or better treatment than prisoners," Fleming said.

John Lusher, the NRC's regional inspector, said that most schoolchildren would be evacuated long before monitoring would be necessary. If that were not the case in a particular emergency, the children would be monitored, he observed.

Fleming and Lampert also criticized the NRC and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for holding the drill in the off-season when the population in the 5 towns served by the drill is the lowest.

"In the summer this is a very different community," said Fleming. "What are you saying? 'If there's going to be an accident, God forbid, it's always going to be in December?'"

Lusher said the emergency crews are trained to handle problems occurring at any time of year.

Overall, state emergency management workers were given good grades by the federal agencies.

The exercise covered all 4 emergency categories -- from the least serious, "an unusual occurrence," to a general emergency, which requires the evacuation of anyone within a 10-mile radius of the plant.

Robert Poole of FEMA's technological hazards branch said everyone performed well and praised emergency crews in all 7 participating towns.

NRC inspectors evaluated how crews inside the plant responded and FEMA personnel kept tabs on the responses of emergency workers in the nearby towns.